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no more adequate and delightful reprint of the great romantic tales.

Hard were it to say in what these "Italian Hours"* of Mr. James are most beautiful—pictures or text or informing spirit. They have the serenity of a wise and perfect maturity, and yet they have the scrupulous and self-conscious enjoyment that only youth is equal to. What with reminiscences and what with post-scripts, they cover at least forty years. Yet how they are of a piece! Their finest quality, perhaps, as it is the rarest in the world, is just the expression more than anything else of an attitude towards life. And such an attitude!—a sort of wise passiveness, a receptivity that accepts the moment for the moment's own sake. The attitude is unimpassioned to the pitch of intensity and catholic to the brink of indifference, and so charged with the sense of life that it affords no margin for incident or event. For better and for worse the hours have massed themselves, in the main, about that ripe and golden middle period—may one say also, where the book is so acutely personal, that golden and ripe middle age?—which many who profess themselves the author's lovers profess to love best among his "manners" and "periods." It is for better by reason of the deliberate, candid, serene apprehension of the multiplicity of life and the equipoise of interests; for worse by the conscious shrinking from the pang of possible passions, and the curious consequent delusion which we remember the late Matthew Arnold to have shared, that the middle age might have been dull. But let the passion only pass from the heart to the head, and who so passionate as our author in every exquisite sensibility? Here, as always, he stands fast by his American colors, his original American judgments of what is and is not, in respect of a moral citizenship, possible. He may sigh for the cardinal's purple stockings, but never for the temporal papacy; he may deplore the ugliness of the Piazza Michael Angelo, but never the routing out of the Mercato Vecchio. He has the tenderest deprecations, the sweetest charity, for the Kingdom of Italy and the needs of the Italian. The hours are

* "Italian Hours." By Henry James, with illustrations in color by Joseph Pennell. Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin Company, 1909.

all golden and of the rarest stuff of life, and they testify that the best of life is, precisely, living.

Like a tree in unusual seasons, the "Mermaid Series" has suddenly and delightfully begun to grow again. At the moment it offers the whole body of Greene's* undisputed drama, with a long and carefully critical introduction. It is a long way from such genial and liberal essays of the old days, as Symonds and Swinburne, for instance, used to prefix to this ardent and argumentative editing; but old days are over and the critical apparatus is deftly handled. To have Greene handy and at hand is a great pleasure—Greene, who is really so sympathetic to us, with his ringing verses, his echoes of his betters and anticipations of the best; with his Anglo-Saxon humor, his equally racial sense for the world out-of-doors; best of all, his positively Victorian conception of wifely devotion and fresh-faced maidenhood.

This might be called the book of platitudes and paradoxes, for it aims not at novelty, but at certainty, and it comes fresher to us than anything written yesterday. The translation seems likely; at any rate, it is admirable; sententious, alive, compact of humor and dignity. To those unacquainted personally with the Chinese sage† it cannot be too heartily commended. It is the finest conceivable embodiment of the purely pagan spirit, the secular ideal of life. Neither Aristotle nor Dante, Browning nor Newman, makes a finer portrait of a gentleman. Courtesy, courage and culture—that is about the formula, but each virtue is at its highest power. "A gentleman is calm and spacious; the vulgar are always fretting." "Not for one moment may a gentleman sin against love; not in flurry and haste, nor yet in utter overthrow." "Rate the task above the prize." "The Master said: 'To learn the truth at daybreak and die at eve were enough.'" He sums up the gentleman in five paradoxes and then explains them thus: "To further what furthers the people, is not that kindness with-

* "Robert Greene." Edited with introduction and notes by Thomas H. Dickinson. "The Mermaid Series." London: T. Fisher Unwin. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1909.

† "The Sayings of Confucius." Translated by Leonard A. Lyall. New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1909.